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Item 2 (c) of the provisional agenda*
Annual ministerial review: implementing the internationally agreed goals and commitments in regard to gender equality and empowerment of women

Statement submitted by African Citizens Development Foundation, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 30 and 31 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* E/2010/100.

10-33637 (E) 280510

Please recycle

Statement

Gender stability: the catalyst to world peace

Gender is the most sensitive and unresolved global issue. It has taken much effort and funding in past decades, yet the matter remains an issue that continues to promote instability in the world, affecting national economic instability, generating weak institutions, poor governance, ethnic and regional conflicts, and wars. The development of women has been undermined for centuries; it has not been recognized as the most important issue in the world. Women have been severely exploited by men, including by their fathers, spouses and relatives. This is more serious in the developing world and it is prevalent in Africa. The position of women has always been misunderstood, often leading women to experience further vulnerability, exploitation and embarrassment, to the detriment of the world community.

The solution is to give women their honourable place in their parental home, where their education has been undermined for centuries. In recent decades, the father will register a company and give priority to male children. This presumes that the girl child has a limited role in the parental home. Unfortunately, the mother and the girl child face unending discrimination in their spouses' homes, and are portrayed as intruders and secondary citizens who have no serious place in the society.

Women deserve the best quality of education and a primary role at home, without prejudice to the man's position as the Chair of home affairs, the mark of honour for his responsibility to provide for all material needs and for the security and comfort of the entire family. Women are the promoters of virtues and values, while men are responsible for the creation of an ideal environment, without attempting to use their material leadership to undermine women's psychic and spiritual leadership.

The United Nations must increase its efforts to promote advocacy for women's education and their place as co-owners and main executors in the home. World peace will not be achieved without acknowledging the place of women in the world setting. When a woman is frustrated or made to be unduly involved in a material search, her human nature will be affected, resulting in emotional damage and undermining her ability to meet global development demands. This will spell doom for the world and create a world which may facilitate future global failure. When a woman is happy, she loves absolutely, with maximum loyalty; when she hates, the world will be in disarray.

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Statement submitted by Alulbayt Foundation, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 30 and 31 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* E/2010/100.

10-33649 (E) 240510

Please recycle

Statement

Promoting women's education and employment as a means for promoting gender equality and empowerment

It is unfortunate that in the twenty-first century there is still a lack of education in some parts of the world for children and in particular for girls who find themselves without the equal opportunities that boys have. This is despite the two prominent Millennium Development Goals dedicated to universal education and gender equality. Our Foundation has projects to support education for girls, especially for orphans and the girl child. We also support the provision of opportunities for women in employment, most recently opening a sewing and crafts workshop in Baghdad, where women are trained and employed part-time, enabling them to dedicate time to families but still learn new skills and receive salaries that contribute to their household income.

However, there is still much to be done especially in countries where women face discrimination and where their rights are withheld by the State itself. We implore these States, particularly those that are made up of Muslim populations or for whom Islam is the State religion, to understand that preventing women having equal opportunities in education and employment is un-Islamic. The Prophet of Islam, Muhammad Ibn Abdullah, peace be upon him and his progeny, has said in one of his most famous statements that seeking knowledge was an obligation on every Muslim, meaning both men and women. Why then do States that profess to respect Islam and run their State in line with its principles deliberately ignore this command?

Furthermore, women still face physical and psychological abuse, as a result of State discrimination and also as victims of political agendas. Some have their husbands taken away for months without knowing what for or when they will be back. Some women are not able to get jobs or go to university because of the ethnic or religious minority they belong to. The complicity of States, particularly those in North Africa, the Middle East and South-Western Asia in such destructive actions is well documented, but unfortunately still goes on. This goes against the rich tradition of Islam, as articulated by Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib, peace be upon him, who says in an instruction to his new governor in Egypt, Malik al-Ashtar: "Develop in your heart the feeling of love for your people and let it be the source of kindliness and blessing to them. Do not behave with them like a barbarian, and do not appropriate to yourself that which belongs to them. Remember that the citizens of the state are of two categories. They are either your brethren in religion or your brethren in kind".

In conclusion, we ask that the Economic and Social Council further press States to uphold the rights of women and to promote equal opportunities for education and employment, as declared by the Millennium Development Goals. We also ask that non-governmental organizations working towards this goal be supported, advised and encouraged.

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Statement submitted by Fédération européenne des femmes actives au foyer, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 30 and 31 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* E/2010/100.

10-33656 (E) 280510

Please recycle

Statement

In the 15 years since the Beijing Platform for Action was agreed and twice reaffirmed by the General Assembly, progress has been made in many areas towards improving the situation of women across the world. The Millennium Development Goals also include a particular focus on aspects of progress for women and children. One area, however, which remains relatively neglected, is the practical recognition and support for unpaid caregiving and related work, the majority of which is still carried out by women.

In Europe, despite the increase in women's hours of paid work, there has not been an equal increase in men's participation in unpaid work. Although European men are carrying out more hours of unpaid work, their contribution as a percentage of total unpaid work carried out has actually fallen since the Platform for Action was drafted.

Promoting women's economic independence is one of the aims of the Platform for Action; employment is recognized as one path towards this goal. Recognition and support for unpaid work will, the organization contends, both reward those who undertake it and provide an incentive for those who are not currently engaged in it. Fédération européenne des femmes actives au foyer member organizations, for example, are regularly contacted by fathers who are looking for ways to fund periods of full- and part-time care for their own children. Recognition for this work will raise the status of both the work and the family caregiver. The skills and competencies acquired during periods of unpaid work should also be more widely recognized to counteract the negative perceptions associated with unpaid caregiving.

Fédération européenne des femmes actives au foyer notes that the ability to develop and implement robust economic and social policy will be improved by the inclusion of unpaid work in the gross domestic product and other relevant statistics. The value of unpaid work is estimated to represent between approximately 30 per cent to 50 per cent of a country's gross domestic product. More importantly, for care outcomes, the ability of families to balance their employment and family responsibilities can be built into policy from the bottom up rather than forcing people to juggle care for dependent family members on the margins of paid work.

Fédération européenne des femmes actives au foyer therefore calls on the States Members of the United Nations in their annual ministerial review to fulfil the commitments they have made to implement the plans contained in the Beijing Platform for Action to account for unremunerated work in relevant United Nations and national statistics, including in satellite gross domestic product accounts and regular time-use surveys and to provide access to lifelong learning and recognition for skills and competencies acquired during periods of unremunerated care and voluntary community work.